

"alarming." More than 10 percent of Federal judgeships are currently vacant. So this problem for our nation that is very serious, particularly after the terrorist attacks in New York and here in Washington.

I have talked to Senator DASCHLE about it. Senator NICKLES and I, along with Senator HATCH, have talked to Senator LEAHY and Senator REID. I know, having been majority leader, that sometimes these problems are hard to resolve. The Judiciary Committee doesn't always follow instructions even from the elected leaders. But this creates a problem. We have been trying to resist slowing down or blocking meetings or progress on the legislative process because we want to move forward on these important bills. But we have to point out that there is a blatant unfairness here, to the country and to the nominees. I can't help but think of the cliché that justice delayed is justice denied. That is what is happening here.

I know my time is running out. I probably will come back and talk more about this later. I ask for fairness, fairness for these eight circuit judges. We can argue about the others later, the other circuit nominees, other district judges, but after an entire year President Bush's first eight nominees should have a hearing. They should have a vote on the Senate floor. No criticisms have been raised against them other than un-attributed hints that they are conservative, and the current majority in the Senate is looking for some sort of a litmus test or conformance, I guess, based on philosophy and ideology. I don't think that either fair or appropriate. It is not what is called for under the Constitution. I hope that the Senate will ultimately find a way to make progress in this area and give these nominees the opportunity to be fairly considered based upon their temperament, professional and educational qualifications, and their personal integrity.

As President Bush has noted in making the case for getting his nominees confirmed, Federal judges are key to making sure America functions well. Every day they uphold the rights of an individual, they protect the innocent, they punish the guilty. Their rulings are essential to the rule of law in our nation. To discharge their responsibilities the federal courts must have judges."

Because of the number of vacancies in our nation's courts, Americans are being forced to wait for justice, and the burden on federal judges is growing heavier.

Mr. President, one newspaper, the Wichita Eagle, got it exactly right on the judges issue back in March in part I think because it is located in the heart of America when it said: "But just as presidents have an obligation not to nominate the incompetent or unqualified to the federal bench, presidents deserve the broad authority in making their choices for such judicial

posts. And the Senate has a responsibility to give those choices every possible consideration and, barring some glaring defect, confirm them quickly. Yet the backstabbing and stalling on judicial confirmations has escalated to the point of obstructing justice. It needs to stop."

This President's nominees are men and women of distinction and great accomplishment. They are solidly within the mainstream of American legal opinion, and they share a principled commitment to follow the law, not legislate it from the bench.

Mr. President, President Bush' nominees should be given fair hearings, voted on, and confirmed by the Senate as soon as possible.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, the people who have been discussing and negotiating the trade matter have asked for a little additional time. In order to accommodate their discussions, I ask unanimous consent that the period for morning business be extended until 3:45.

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, at this point I would have to object. I don't know that I would want to. I just have not had a chance to discuss this with Senator DASCHLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

(The remarks of Mr. CLELAND pertaining to the introduction of S. 1492 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

#### EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business expire at 3:45 today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Kansas is recognized.

#### JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the past year's judicial nominations, which is something on which several people have spoken today. I just came from a meeting with the President where he was talking about his frustration in getting judicial nominees considered. He was quite animated and discouraged that we have not been getting more judicial nominees through the system—particularly circuit court judges. That is what he was stating. That is what the meeting

was about. He wants to see more happening and more of them occurring, and we need to do so. People have been pretty clear on the information of what technically and specifically has happened.

Since May 9 of last year, we have had 11 judicial nominees for the U.S. circuit courts of appeal. Those eleven were nominated 1 year ago. Since that time, only 3—including 2 Democrats—have been confirmed. Of the remaining 8, not one has even been scheduled for a hearing. We have not held hearings on these individuals. We need to get this done and start to move them forward. It is an issue that is engaging the country, and I think increasingly so, as we move into the fall. We have a number of pieces of legislation that I think, in the post 9-11 environment, will be considered and looked at by the courts and need to be reviewed. We need to have a fully staffed court. Right now we have a 20-percent vacancy on the circuit court; and within some of the circuits, it is even a much larger one.

In the Sixth Circuit there are 16 positions and only half of those are filled.

What is even more troubling is that we have had a long and established tradition of giving the President—regardless of his political affiliation—a good deal of deference on his nominees who might be unfairly targeted as being extremists.

However, as we found out during the Charles Pickering nomination and subsequent hearings, the real extremism is being employed by those people who are artfully using the terms "balance" and "moderation" to set the stage for ending deference to the President and excluding perfectly qualified judges. Judge Pickering was an individual nominated to go on the circuit court. He served on the Federal bench for over 10 years.

This practice does not bode well for the future of this committee when it may have to deal with Supreme Court nominees in the near future. To highlight just how bad it can be, it might be helpful to see how many Supreme Court Justices of the past would fare under the ideological litmus test that is now plainly evident and used on the committee.

Would some of our great Justices of the past survive the litmus test being put forward by the committee now?

John Marshall, the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and author of some of the most important legal decisions for this Nation, would likely be rejected today by the Judiciary Committee because his view on interstate commerce in the *Gibbons v. Odgen* would be seen as too pro-federalism.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, perhaps the greatest Supreme Court justice, would have trouble because he affirmed a state law providing for the sterilization of the mentally ill in *Buck v. Bell*. Felix Frankfurter, an ACLU member and a "liberal" Roosevelt appointee, would be rejected because he did not believe that the fourth amendment required the exclusion of evidence seized